

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 07504 291613Z

44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 RSR-01 /124 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1054

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

INFO DOD PRIORITY

DIA PRIORITY

USCINCSO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 7504

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS CO VE

SUBJ: PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE VENEZUELAN & COLOMBIAN MIRAGES FOR F-4
PHANTOMS

SUMMARY: TWO INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT AN AMERICAN FIRM ARE
PROPOSING TO COLOMBIAN AND VENEZUELAN AIR FORCES TO BUY THEIR MIRAGES,

ACCEPTING PROBABLE COUNTERDEMAND TO EXCHANGE THEM FOR F-4 PHANTOMS
OR, POSSIBLY, F-5E'S. END SUMMARY.

1. AUGUST 28 TWO INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBING SELVES AS AMERICAN CITIZENS
AL BOYLES AND ALBERT BENAJAM, REPRESENTING PINTO ENTERPROSES LTD.,
151 CHROSTOPHER STREET, MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY, HELD DISCUSSION WITH
DEFENSE ATTACHE AND CHIEF, AF SECTION MILGP, CONCERNING A PLAN TO
BUY MIRAGE AIRCRAFT. THEY SAID THEY ARRIVED CARACAS SEVERAL DAYS
AGO FROM BOGOTA, WHERE THEY HAD DISCUSSED WITH COLOMBIAN AF
REPRESENTATIVES (ONE COL. GOMEZ AND OTHERS) DESIRE TO PURCHASE FOR
IMMEDIATE ACCEPTANCE (AS IS) AS MANY MIRAGES AS COLOMBIANS WOULD
SELL. THOUGH THEY GAVE NO DETAILS OF PRICE OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS,
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PAGE 02 CARACA 07504 291613Z

THEY INDICATED COLOMBIANS ARE HIGHLY INTERESTED, PARTICULARLY IF

F-4'S COULD BE SUPPLIED TO REPLACE MIRAGES. BOYLES AND BENAAM SAY THEY WILL DISCUSS SAME DEAL WITH VENEZUELAN AF.

2. BOYLES AND BENAAM SAY THEY UNDERSTAND US DOES NOT AUTHORIZE F-4 SALES IN LATIN AMERICA, YET CLAIM THIS DOES NOT FORECLOSE DEAL ON ABOVE LINES. HOWEVER, THEY WILL TRY TO SUGGEST F-5E'S AS REPLACEMENTS RATHER THAN F-4'S, WHICH THEY AGREE WILL BE DIFFICULT TO PROCURE. THEY REFUSED TO NAME COUNTRY FOR WHICH MIRAGES ARE DESTINED, BUT CLAIM THEY CAN MAKE A PROFIT EVEN IF THEY BUY COLOMBIA'S AND VENEZUELA'S MIRAGES FOR WHAT TWO COUNTRIES PAID FOR THEM. THEY SAY PROPOSED RECIPIENT IS "NOT IN THIS HEMISPHERE" BUT IS "MOST ACCEPTABLE TO US"; THEY CLAIM THEY HAVE DEPARTMENT APPROVAL FOR THIS PURCHASE AND SUBSEQUENT RESALE. TWO HAVE NOT YET TALKED TO VENEZUELAN AF BUT HAVE INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO VENEZUELAN ARMY OFFICER GIVEN TO THEM, THEY SAY, BY US BUSINESSMAN WHO PERIODICALLY VISITS CARACAS TO "SELL MILITARY EQUIPMENT".

3. BOYLES/BENAAM STORY RAISES SUCH UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AS:
(A) WHY SHOULD ULTIMATE CUSTOMER PAY MORE THAN NEW PLANE PRICE FOR USED MIRAGES? AND (B) WHAT MAKES THEM THINK THEY HAVE EVEN A CHANCE OF LAYING HANDS ON SURPLUS F-4'S? IN ANY CASE, DEFENSE ATTACHE AGREED TO RENDER MINIMUM ASSISTANCE TO US BUSINESSMEN OF ADVISING APPROPRIATE VENEZUELAN AF CONTACTS OF THEIR IDENTITIES AND INTERESTS. HOWEVER, NEITHER DAO NOR ANY OTHER ELEMENT OF EMBASSY WILL BE INVOLVED TO ANY GREATER EXTENT IN THEIR BUSINESS, WHATEVER IT IS.
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